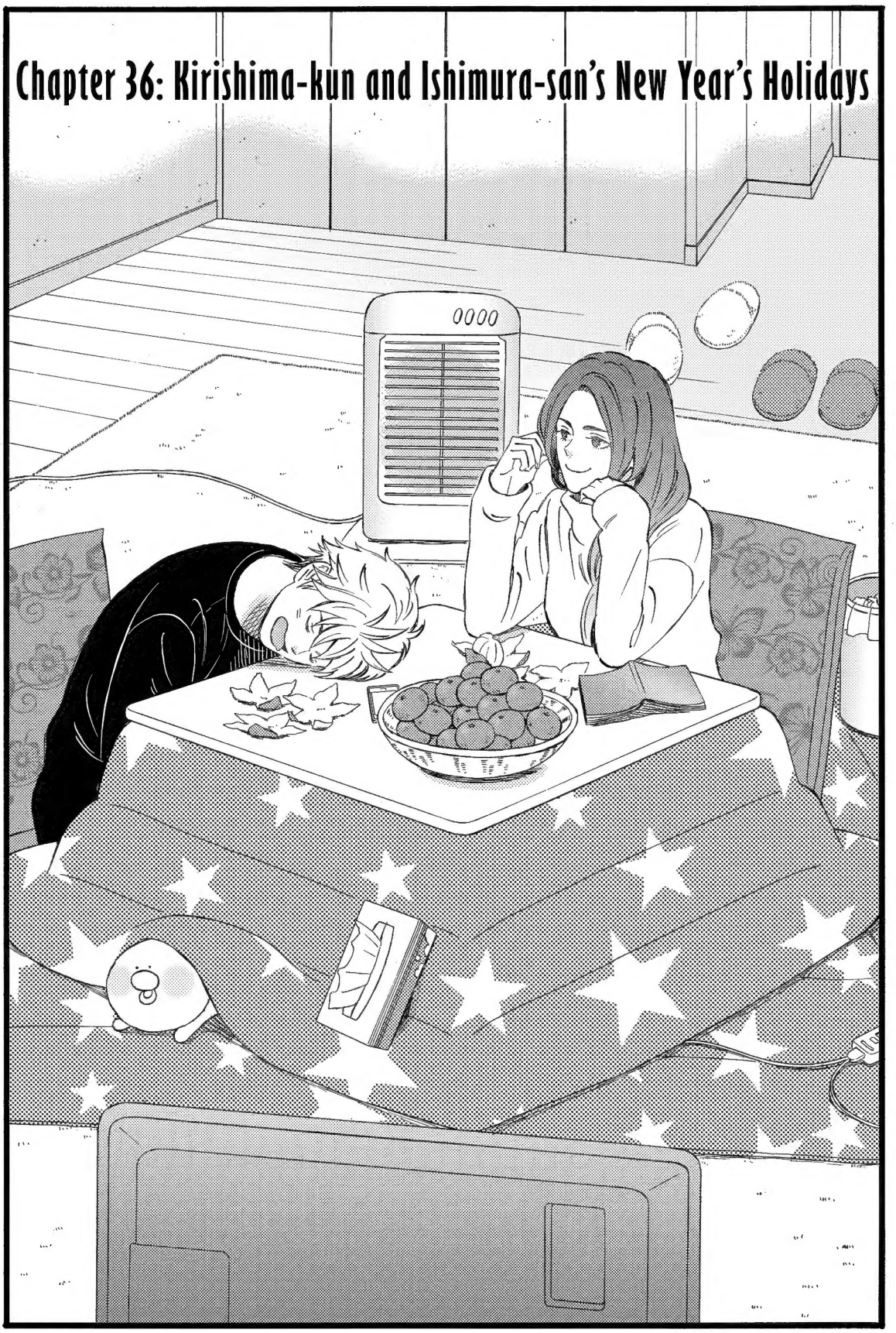
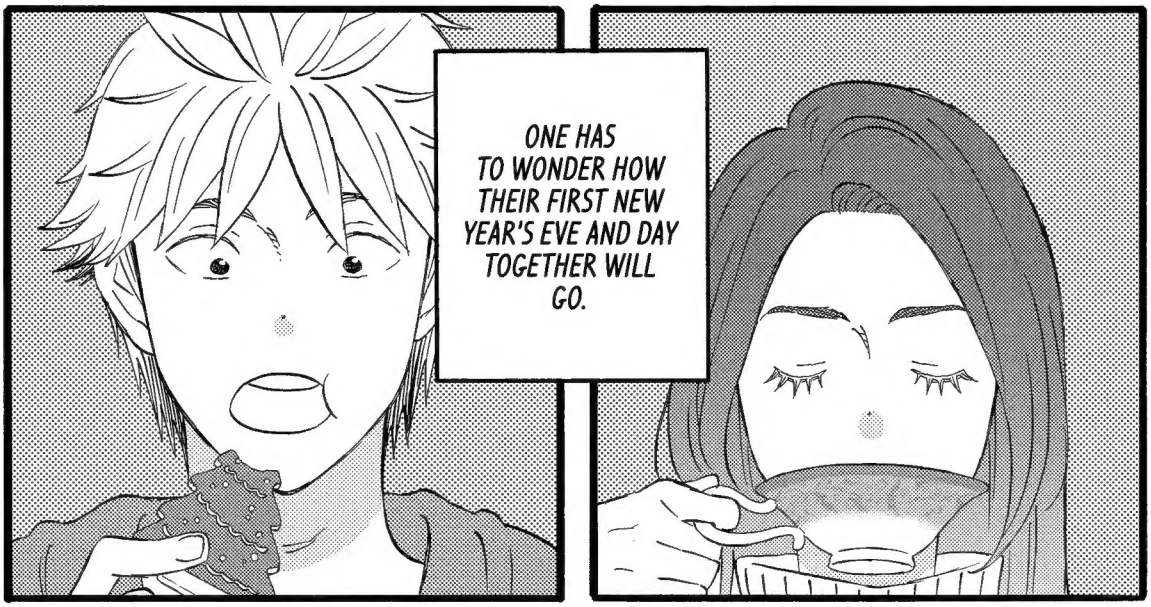
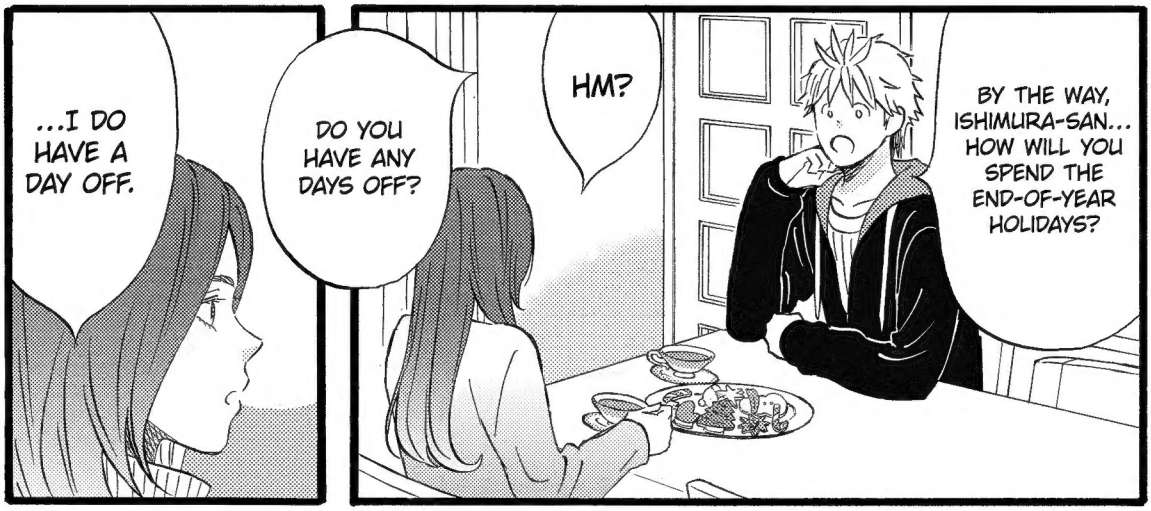
Chapter 36: Kirishima-kun and Ishimura-san's New Year's Holidays

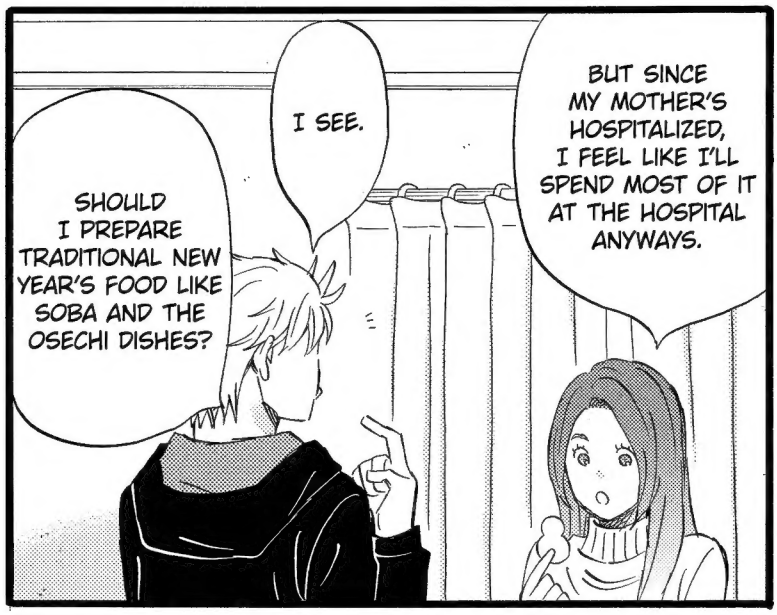


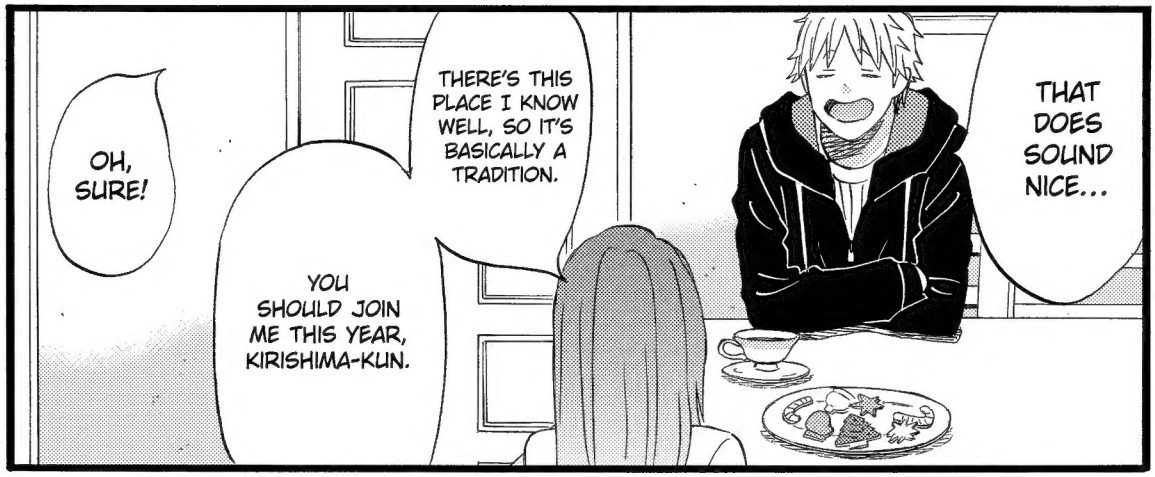
IT'S THE END OF THE YEAR.
THE COUPLE IS SPENDING THE NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAYS TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME.
AS THE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR UPBRINGING MAY CAUSE THE TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST BEGUN LIVING TOGETHER TO FEEL AT ODDS...

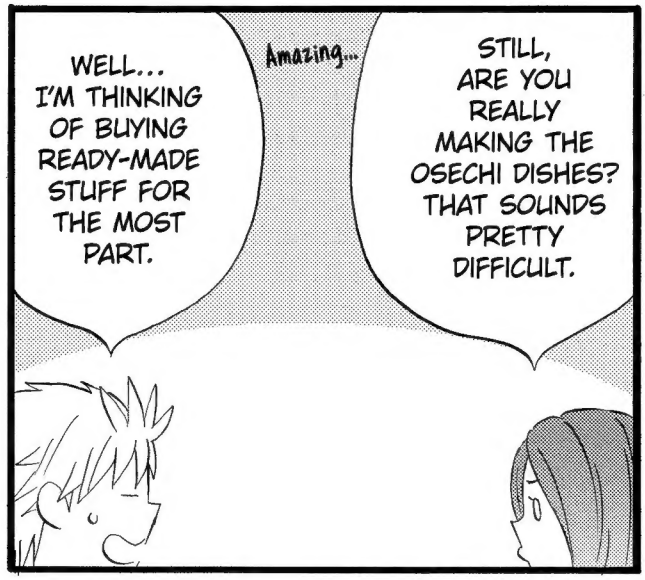

ONE HAS TO WONDER HOW THEIR FIRST NEW YEAR'S EVE AND DAY TOGETHER WILL GO.


BY THE WAY, ISHIMURA-SAN... HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE END-OF-YEAR HOLIDAYS?
HM?
DO YOU HAVE ANY DAYS OFF?
...I DO HAVE A DAY OFF.

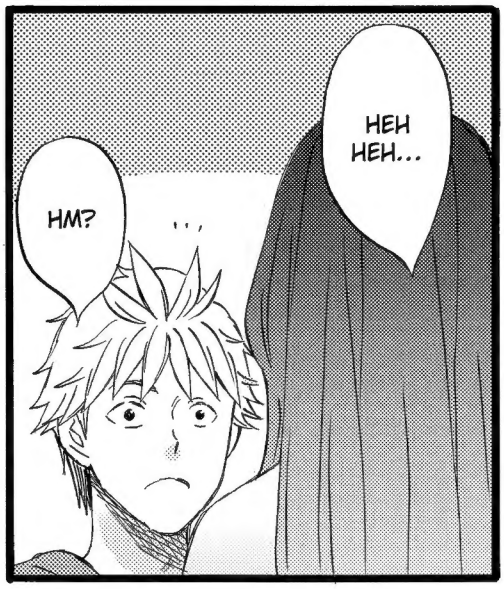
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, I USUALLY JUST GO TO MY FAVORITE SOBA RESTAURANT.
YOUR FAVORITE?!
Ohh...

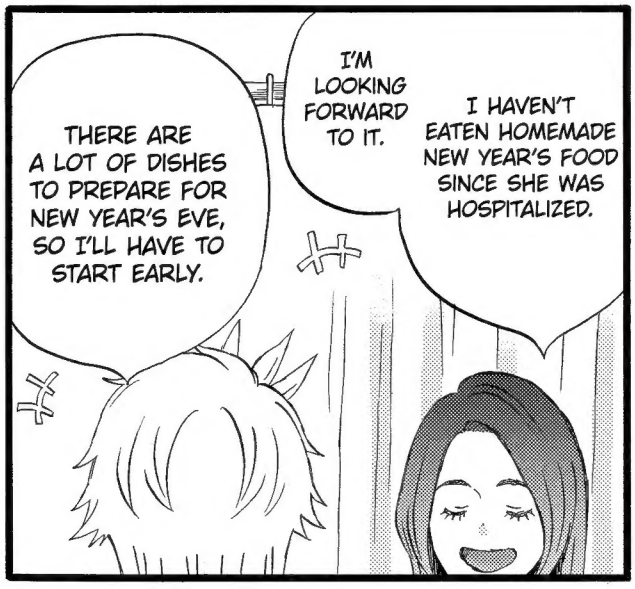

BUT SINCE MY MOTHER'S HOSPITALIZED, I FEEL LIKE I'LL SPEND MOST OF IT AT THE HOSPITAL ANYWAYS.
I SEE.
SHOULD I PREPARE TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR'S FOOD LIKE SOBA AND THE OSECHI DISHES?


THAT DOES SOUND NICE...
THERE'S THIS PLACE I KNOW WELL, SO IT'S BASICALLY A TRADITION.
YOU SHOULD JOIN ME THIS YEAR, KIRISHIMA-KUN.
OH, SURE!

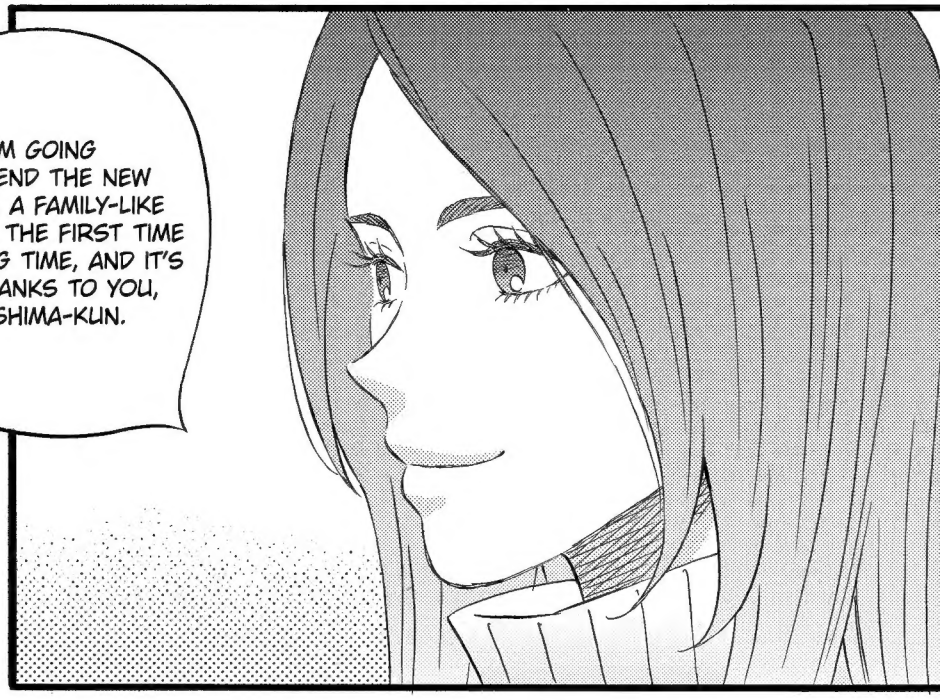

STILL, ARE YOU REALLY MAKING THE OSECHI DISHES? THAT SOUNDS PRETTY DIFFICULT.
Amazing...
WELL... I'M THINKING OF BUYING READY-MADE STUFF FOR THE MOST PART.

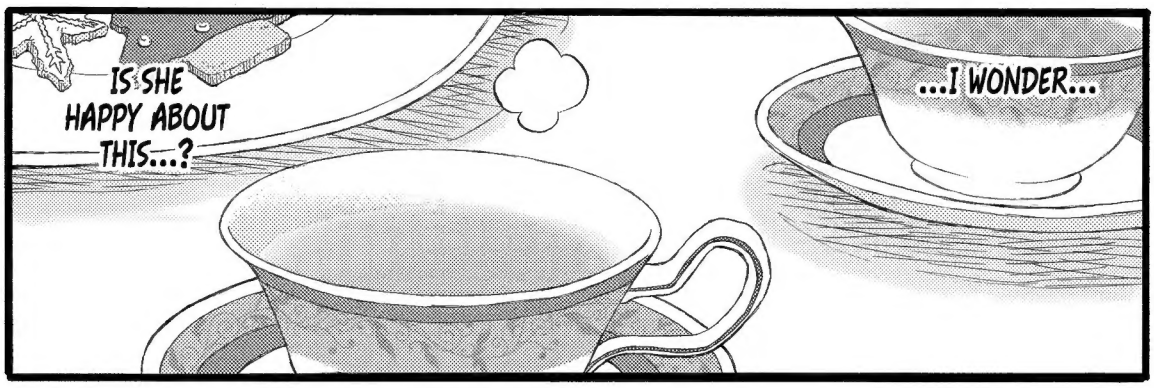
BUT DISHES LIKE OZONI OR CHIKUZENNI DEFINITELY SOUND FEASIBLE...
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. MY MOTHER USED TO DO THE SAME THING.
I found some promising recipes.

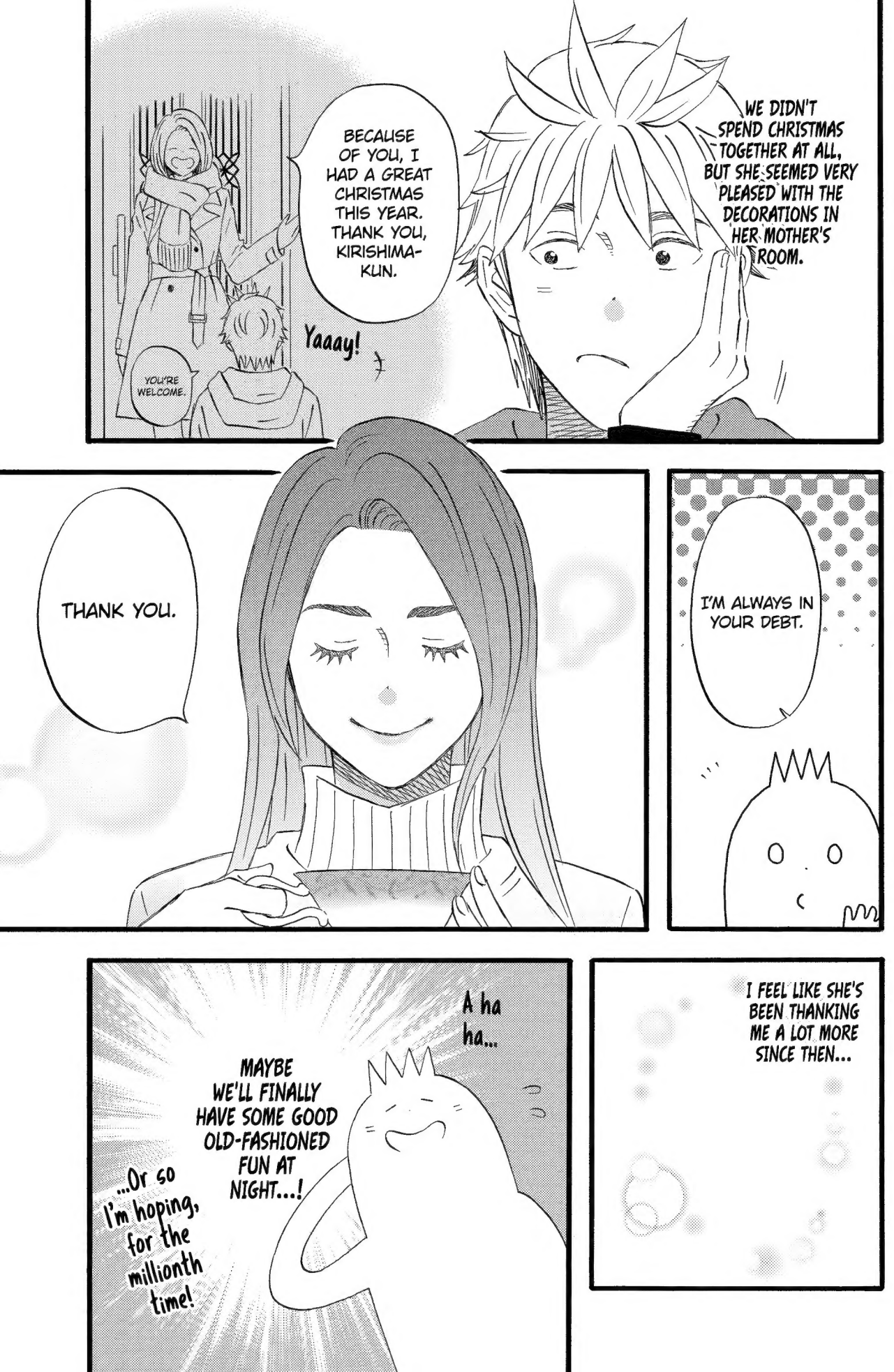

HEH HEH...
HM?
...


I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
I HAVEN'T EATEN HOMEMADE NEW YEAR'S FOOD SINCE SHE WAS HOSPITALIZED.
THERE ARE A LOT OF DISHES TO PREPARE FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE, SO I'LL HAVE TO START EARLY.

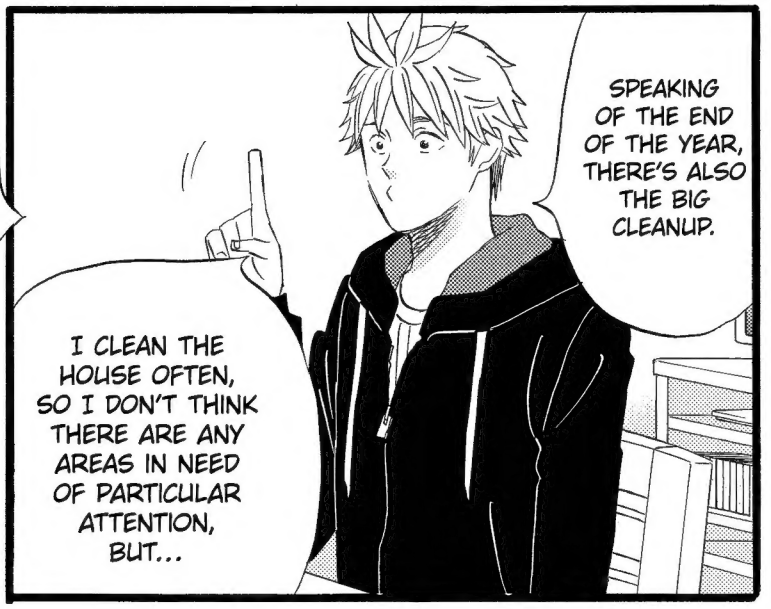
I'M GOING TO SPEND THE NEW YEAR IN A FAMILY-LIKE WAY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, KIRISHIMA-KUN.

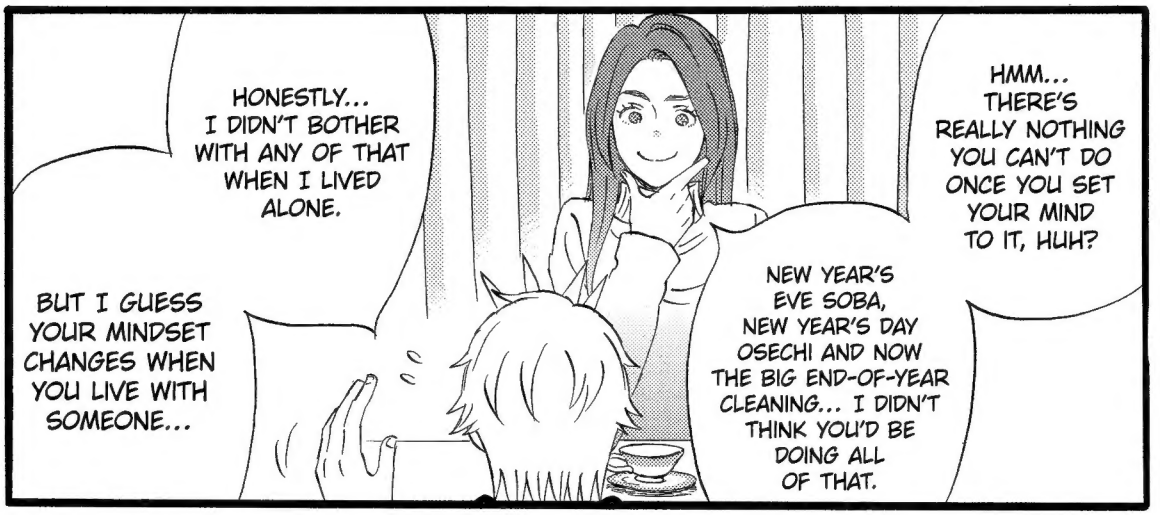



IS SHE HAPPY ABOUT THIS...?
...I WONDER...


WE DIDN'T SPEND CHRISTMAS TOGETHER AT ALL, BUT SHE SEEMED VERY PLEASED WITH THE DECORATIONS IN HER MOTHER'S ROOM.
BECAUSE OF YOU, I HAD A GREAT CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR. THANK YOU, KIRISHIMA-KUN.
Yaaay!
YOU'RE WELCOME.
THANK YOU.
I'M ALWAYS IN YOUR DEBT.
A ha ha...
MAYBE WE'LL FINALLY HAVE SOME GOOD OLD-FASHIONED FUN AT NIGHT...!
...Or so I'm hoping, for the millionth time!
I FEEL LIKE SHE'S BEEN THANKING ME A LOT MORE SINCE THEN...

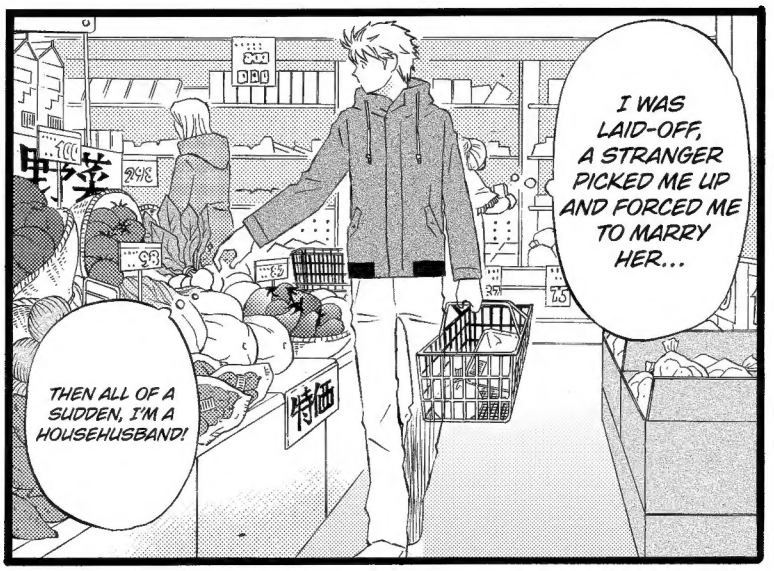
LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU WANT ME TO CLEAN.
I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ...

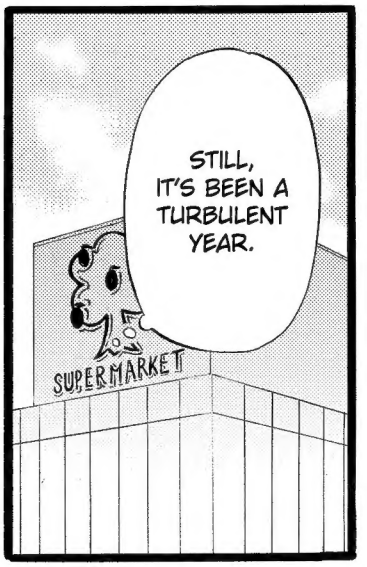

SPEAKING OF THE END OF THE YEAR, THERE'S ALSO THE BIG CLEANUP.
I CLEAN THE HOUSE OFTEN, SO I DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY AREAS IN NEED OF PARTICULAR ATTENTION, BUT...


HMM... THERE'S REALLY NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO ONCE YOU SET YOUR MIND TO IT, HUH?
NEW YEAR'S EVE SOBA, NEW YEAR'S DAY OSECHI AND NOW THE BIG END-OF-YEAR CLEANING... I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE DOING ALL OF THAT.
HONESTLY... I DIDN'T BOTHER WITH ANY OF THAT WHEN I LIVED ALONE.
BUT I GUESS YOUR MINDSET CHANGES WHEN YOU LIVE WITH SOMEONE...

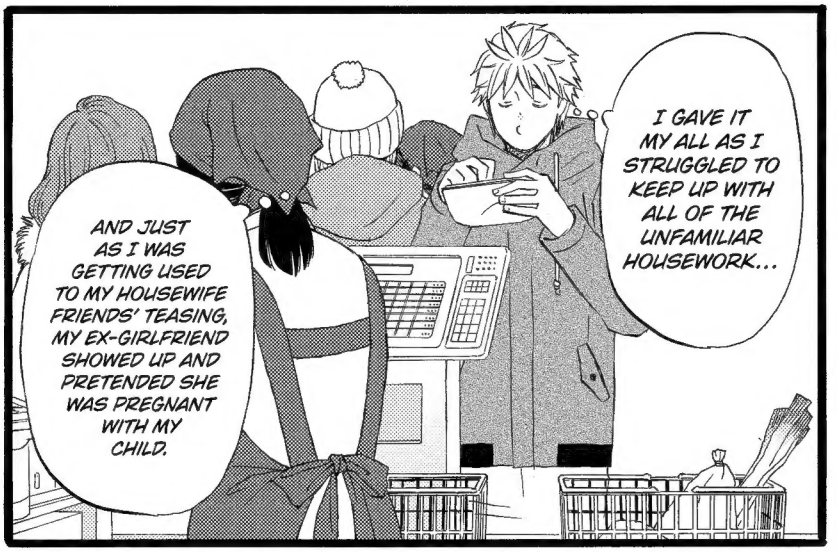
BESIDES, YOU TOLD ME YOU'D DIVORCE ME IF I DIDN'T DO THE HOUSEWORK PROPERLY.
HA HA HA! RIGHT, I DID SAY THAT...

I FEEL LIKE... THE DISTANCE BETWEEN OUR HEARTS HAS SHRUNK...
Ha ha ha!
Heh heh heh!


I WAS LAID-OFF, A STRANGER PICKED ME UP AND FORCED ME TO MARRY HER...
THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M A HOUSEHUSBAND!
野菜
特価


STILL, IT'S BEEN A TURBULENT YEAR.
SUPERMARKET

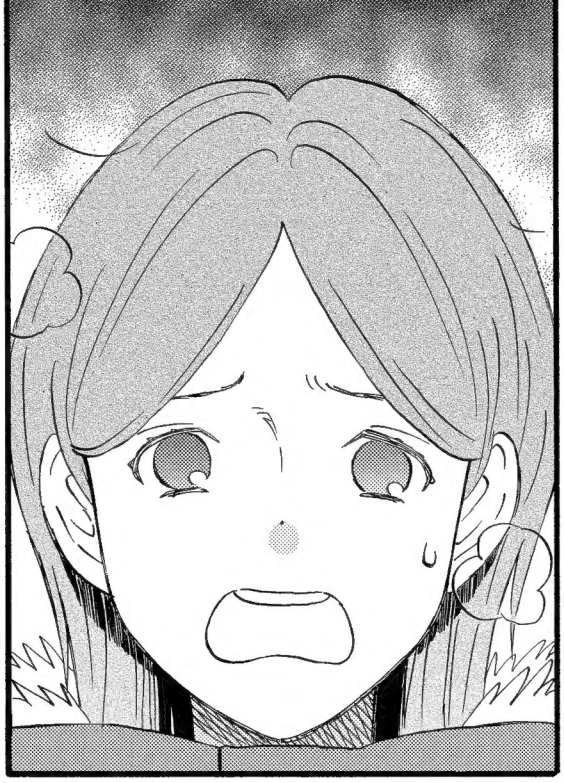
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I WENT THROUGH A LOT...


I GAVE IT MY ALL AS I STRUGGLED TO KEEP UP WITH ALL OF THE UNFAMILIAR HOUSEWORK...
AND JUST AS I WAS GETTING USED TO MY HOUSEWIFE FRIENDS' TEASING, MY EX-GIRLFRIEND SHOWED UP AND PRETENDED SHE WAS PREGNANT WITH MY CHILD.

KIRISHIMA-SAN!

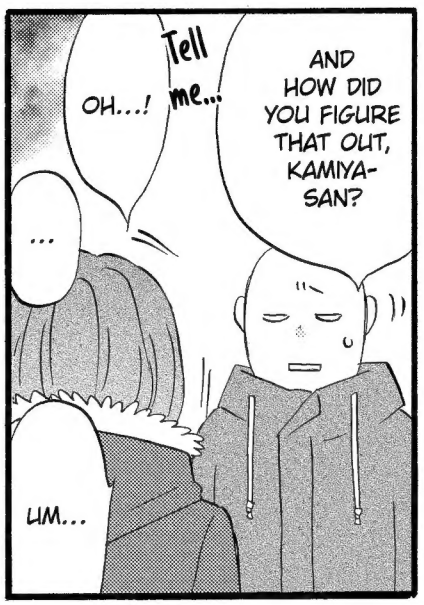
BUT I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN GETTING ALONG REALLY WELL WITH ISHIMURA-SAN LATELY.

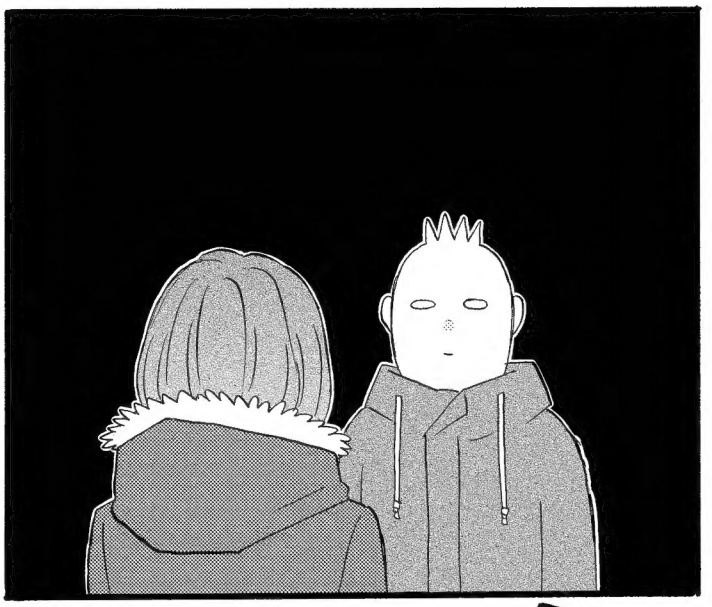
...RIGHT. THERE WAS ALSO A STALKER INCIDENT THIS YEAR.
Haa...



W-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, THIS LATE IN THE YEAR?!
DIDN'T YOU PROMISE YOU WOULDN'T STALK US ANYMORE?!!
THAT'S IRRELEVANT RIGHT NOW! I HAVE AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR YOU!
WHAAAT...?

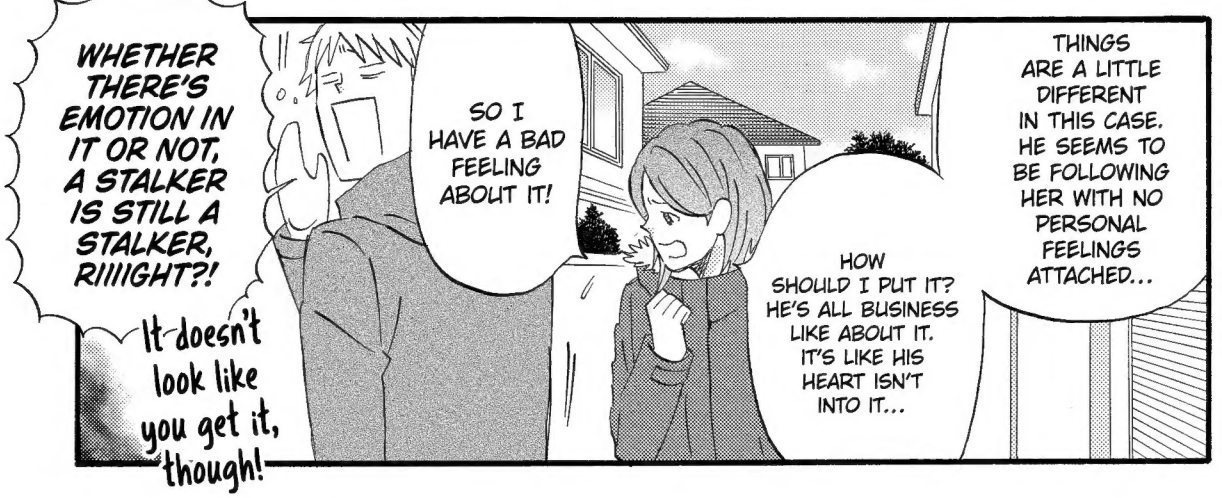
FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS...
A SUSPICIOUS MAN HAS BEEN FOLLOWING ISHIMURA-SAMA...!
WHA-?!


AND HOW DID YOU FIGURE THAT OUT, KAMIYA-SAN?
Tell me...
OH...!
...
UM...



I... WAS ABLE TO DRIVE OFF ALL THE NEFARIOUS CROOKS WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FOLLOW ISHIMURA-SAMA SO FAR, BUT...
SO THERE'S BEEN A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN STALKERS. I HAD NO IDEA...

PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE DETAILS!!
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AT ALL, BUT SHE'S STILL CLEARLY STALKING US...


WHETHER THERE'S EMOTION IN IT OR NOT, A STALKER IS STILL A STALKER, RIIIIGHT?!
It doesn't look like you get it, though!
SO I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT IT!
HOW SHOULD I PUT IT? HE'S ALL BUSINESS LIKE ABOUT IT. IT'S LIKE HIS HEART ISN'T INTO IT...
THINGS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT IN THIS CASE. HE SEEMS TO BE FOLLOWING HER WITH NO PERSONAL FEELINGS ATTACHED...

4F
3F
2F
OX DETECTIVE AGENCY
BEAUTY PARLOR
I SAW HIM ENTER A DETECTIVE AGENCY.
WHAT...?! A DETECTIVE AGENCY?!

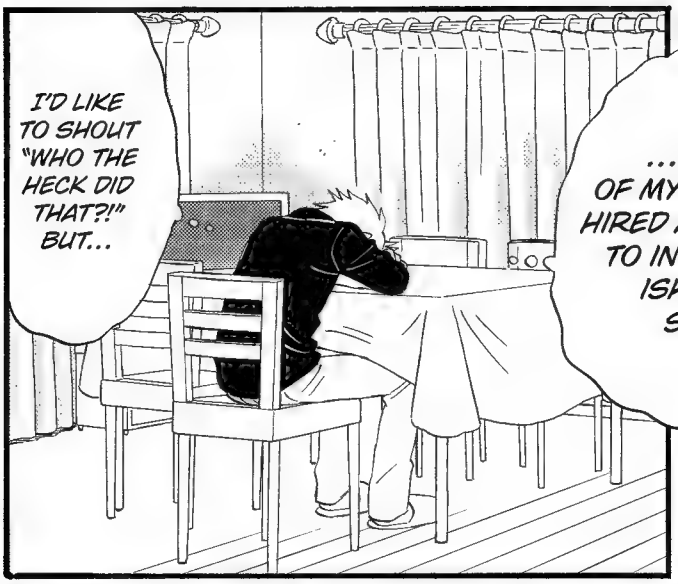
SO WHEN I TRIED TO FOLLOW THE STALKER...

A RELATIVE OF YOURS, KIRISHIMA-SAN.
WHA-?!

YES. AND THIS IS WHERE IT GETS TRICKY.
FURTHER INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THE DETECTIVE'S CLIENT IS...

UM...
I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOUR OWN ACTIONS FIRST, KAMIYA-SAN...
Shake
YOU MUST STOP THEM IMMEDIATELY !!!
Shake
WHATEVER THEIR MOTIVATION, PURSUING ISHIMURA-SAMA IN THIS MANNER IS TRULY DESPICABLE...

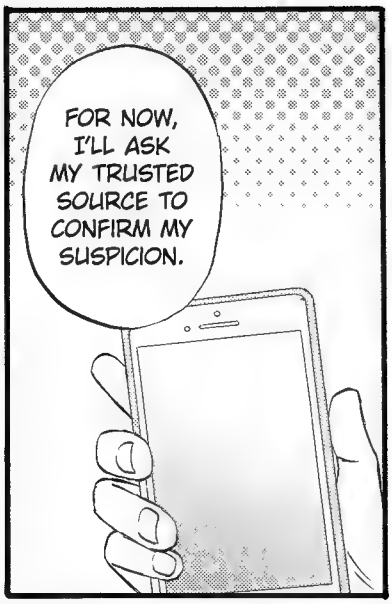
THE DETECTIVE IS ONLY DOING HIS JOB. HE'S NOT AT FAULT HERE...
ALL RIGHT, FINE! I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...
IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, I'LL BE FORCED TO USE MY OWN METHODS!


I'D LIKE TO SHOUT "WHO THE HECK DID THAT?!" BUT...

...SO ONE OF MY RELATIVES HIRED A DETECTIVE TO INVESTIGATE ISHIMURA-SAN...?

I WAS SO BUSY WITH HOUSEWORK THAT I MISSED THE OBON FAMILY GATHERING...
I MEAN, SERIOUSLY?! WHAT A PAAAIN! IT WAS DEFINITELY HER...!
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
WHAT'S MORE, I DIDN'T TELL ANY OF THEM ABOUT MY MARRIAGE...

I CAN'T DENY THAT I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT WHO IT WAS...

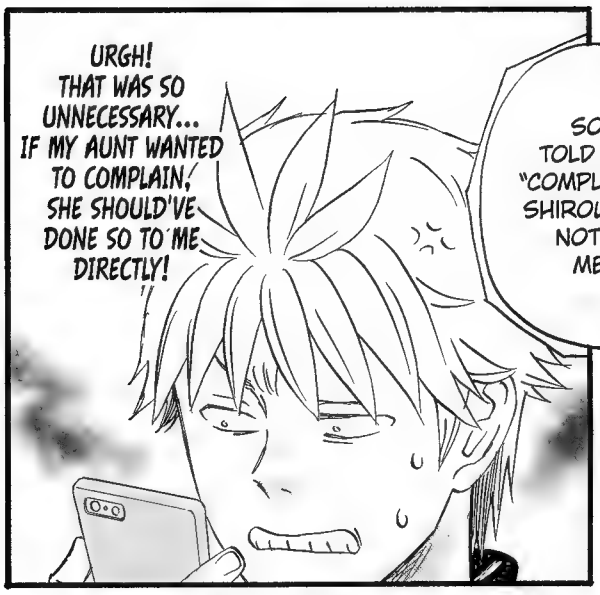

FOR NOW, I'LL ASK MY TRUSTED SOURCE TO CONFIRM MY SUSPICION.

Siiiigh...
...
I'D LIKE TO IGNORE THIS MATTER COMPLETELY. BUT SHE'S EVEN HIRED A DETECTIVE, SO I DON'T THINK THAT'S AN OPTION...

OH, YEAH... I TOLD AUNT HARUMI ABOUT IT THE OTHER DAY!
YOUR MARRIAGE?
Heh heh heh...

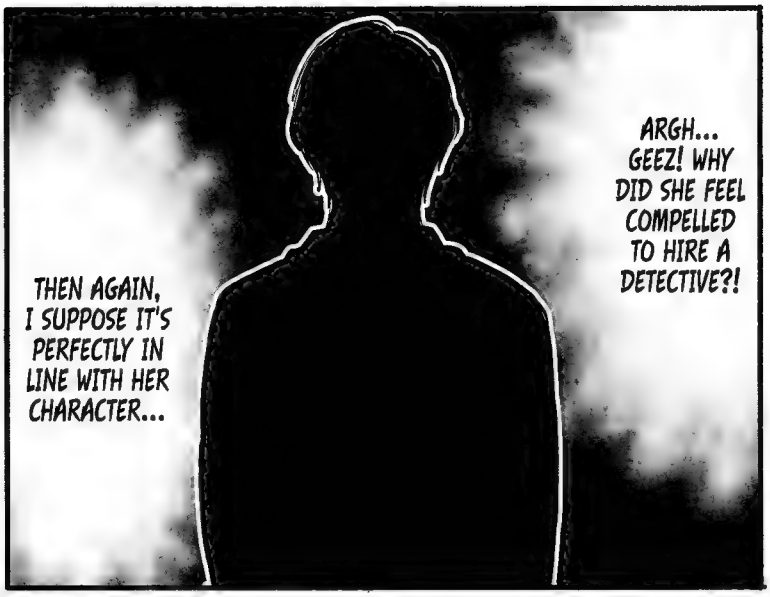
SHE'S NOT LISTENIN...
SHE WAS REALLY SURPRISED... SHE SCOLDED ME, "WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SOONER?!"

WHY DID YOU DO THAT? I SHOULD'VE BEEN THE ONE TO TELL HER...
WELL... OF COURSE. I FIGURED IT MUST HAVE BEEN HER...


URGH! THAT WAS SO UNNECESSARY... IF MY AUNT WANTED TO COMPLAIN, SHE SHOULD'VE DONE SO TO ME DIRECTLY!
SO I TOLD HER, "COMPLAIN TO SHIROU-KUN, NOT TO ME!"

BUT I MEAN... YOU MARRIED WITHOUT TELLING ME, SO I DIDN'T KNOW, EITHER. IT'S UNFAIR THAT I WAS SCOLDED!

...OH WELL, I NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...

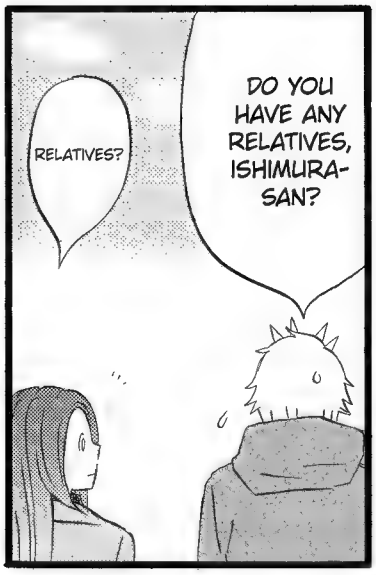

THEN AGAIN, I SUPPOSE IT'S PERFECTLY IN LINE WITH HER CHARACTER...
ARGH... GEEZ! WHY DID SHE FEEL COMPELLED TO HIRE A DETECTIVE?!

AND SO, NEW YEAR'S EVE ARRIVED.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
Rattle
Rattle
Rattle
Handmade Soba Restaurant

...
I've been eating New Year's Eve soba here ever since.
A friend of mine told me about it years ago.

SO, WHAT DID YOU THINK? WASN'T THE SOBA DELICIOUS?
INDEED IT WAS! THE RESTAURANT HAS THIS GENUINE ATMOSPHERE ABOUT IT.

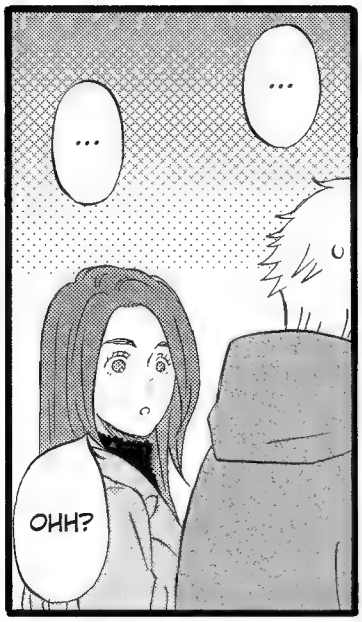
OHH...
I MEAN... DOESN'T YOUR FAMILY HAVE A TRADITION OF GETTING TOGETHER AT THE START OF THE YEAR FOR A FAMILY PARTY?


RELATIVES?
DO YOU HAVE ANY RELATIVES, ISHIMURA-SAN?

UM!
I REALIZE THIS IS OFF-TOPIC, BUT...

...
BUT IT JUST DOESN'T SUIT MY PERSONALITY...

I'M SURE IT COULD BE EXCITING AND FUN IF I HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH MY RELATIVES...
I HAVE DISTANT RELATIVES BUT WE'RE NOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO DO THINGS LIKE THAT, SO...
Ha ha ha!
FORTUNATELY, I DON'T HAVE TO GO TO SUCH ANNOYING EVENTS.


...
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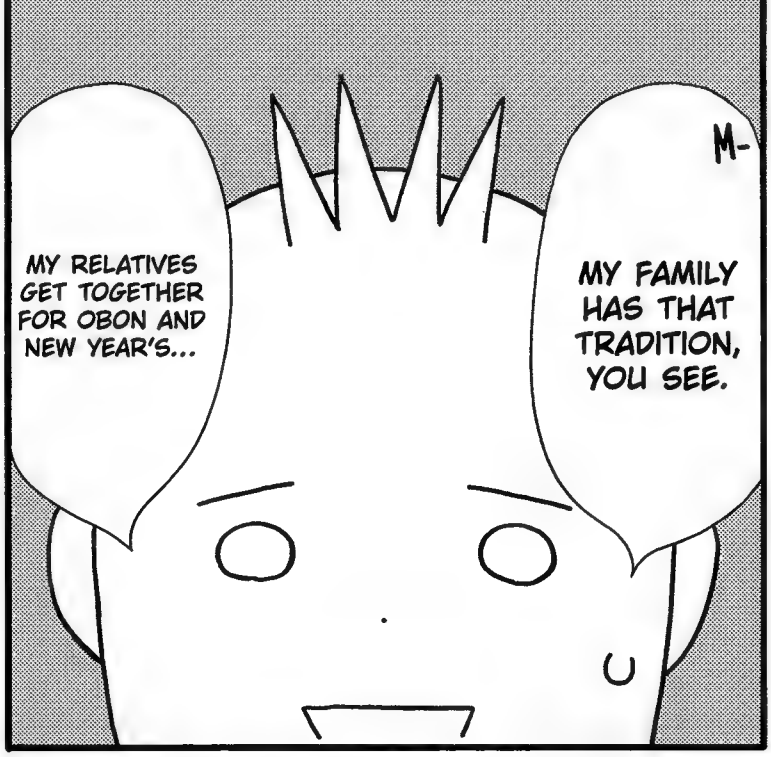
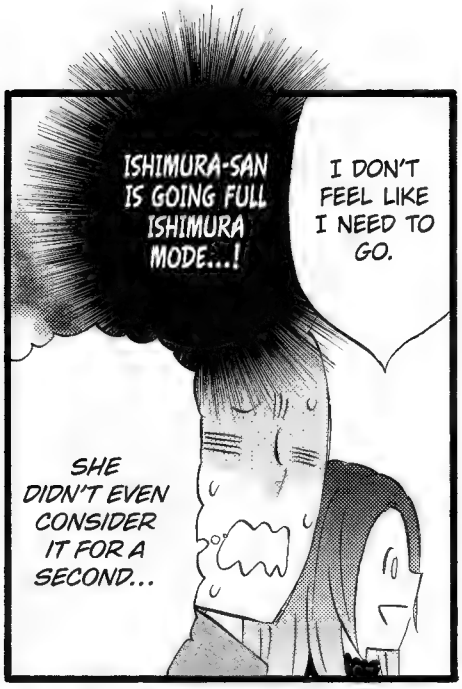
OHH?


MY RELATIVES GET TOGETHER FOR OBON AND NEW YEAR'S...
M-
MY FAMILY HAS THAT TRADITION, YOU SEE.

I ALSO HAVE YET TO REPORT THE MARRIAGE TO THEM. IF I DON'T GO, IT'LL BE BAD FOR SURE...
I SEE...
I GOT MARRIED. SO I DON'T THINK SKIPPING IS AN OPTION THIS YEAR...
IT'S NOT LIKE I JOIN THEM EVERY TIME. I OFTEN SKIP THOSE EVENTS, BUT WELL...

UM... PLEASE LISTEN...!
IT'S ONLY A ONE-DAY TRIP, SO WOULD YOU MIND ACCOMPANYING ME AND SAYING A QUICK HELLO TO THEM...?!

AHHH... YUP, I KNEW IT. I DEFINITELY KNEW YOU'D RESPOND LIKE THAT!
HAVE FUN!
And take care!


ISHIMURA-SAN IS GOING FULL ISHIMURA MODE...!
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I NEED TO GO.
SHE DIDN'T EVEN CONSIDER IT FOR A SECOND...

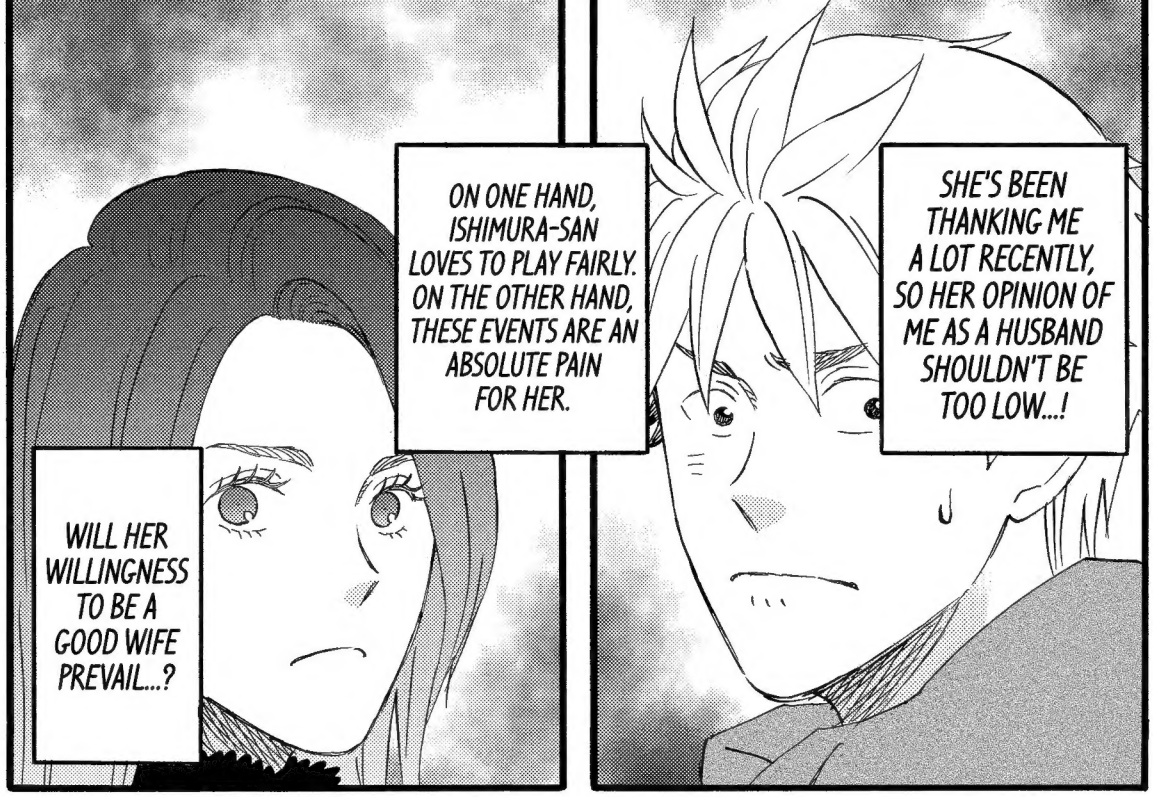
I'M NOT GOING.

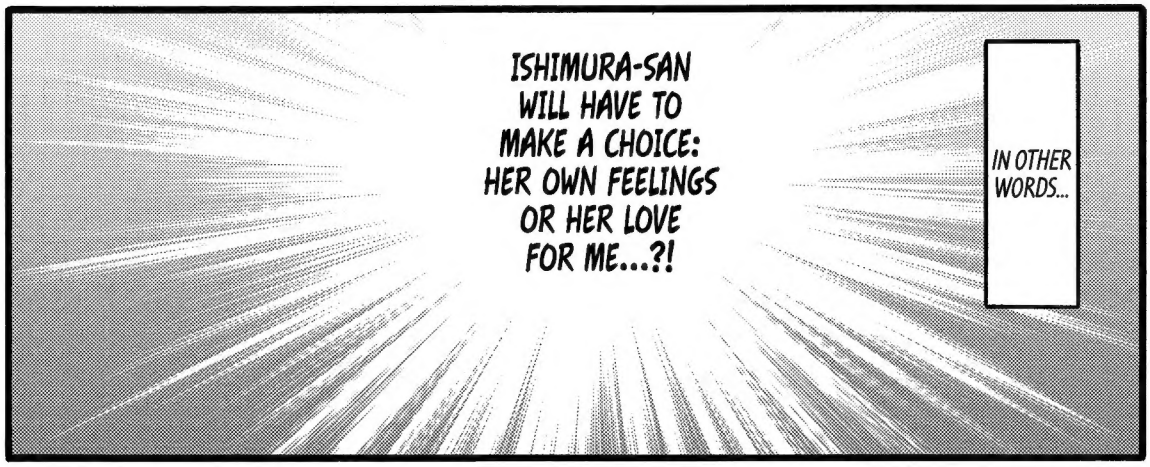
I THINK... A GOOD WIFE WOULD JOIN HER HUSBAND FOR THESE SORTS OF EVENTS, YOU KNOW?

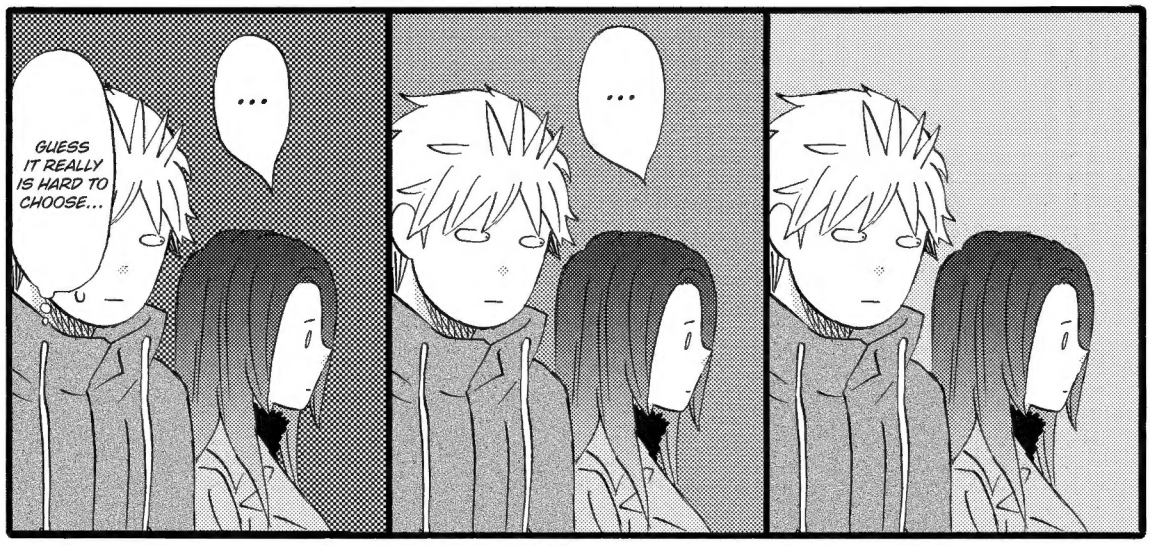
Ahem!

SHIT... THEN AGAIN, WE'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR A FEW MONTHS ALREADY.
I HAVE DEVELOPED A STRATEGY FOR THIS KIND OF OCCASION...!

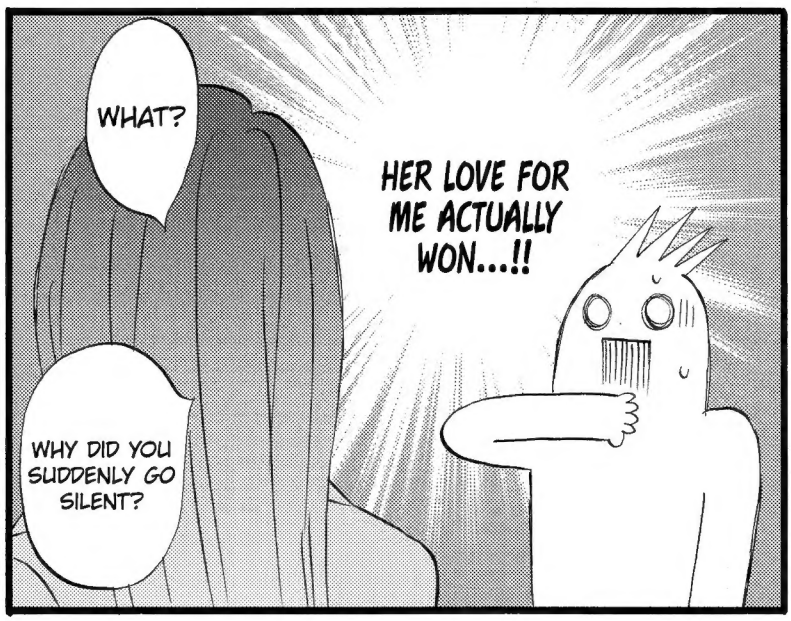
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD FORCE YOURSELF TO BE A GOOD WIFE EITHER, BUT...
I MEAN... IF YOU DON'T THINK I'M BEING A GOOD HUSBAND...
JUST SAYING, YOU KNOW? FOR THE SAKE OF FAIRNESS.
REALLY ...?
Halt


ON ONE HAND, ISHIMURA-SAN LOVES TO PLAY FAIRLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THESE EVENTS ARE AN ABSOLUTE PAIN FOR HER.
SHE'S BEEN THANKING ME A LOT RECENTLY, SO HER OPINION OF ME AS A HUSBAND SHOULDN'T BE TOO LOW...!
WILL HER WILLINGNESS TO BE A GOOD WIFE PREVAIL...?

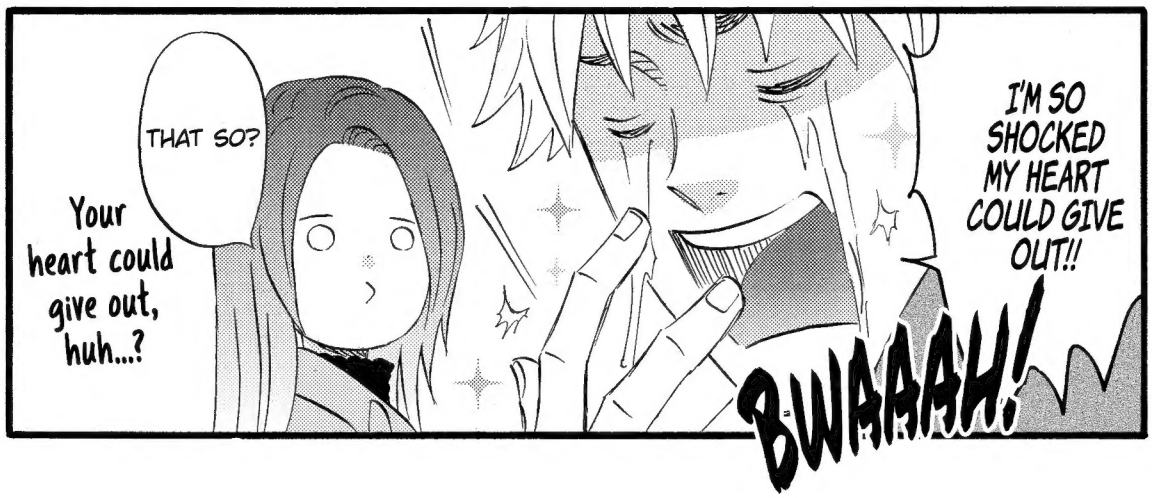

ISHIMURA-SAN WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE: HER OWN FEELINGS OR HER LOVE FOR ME...?!
IN OTHER WORDS...


GUESS IT REALLY IS HARD TO CHOOSE...
...
...

I SEE...
W-WELL... MORE THAN MAKING ME HAPPY, IT'D BE QUITE HELPFUL...?
IN THAT CASE...
WILL YOU BE HAPPY IF I JOIN YOU AT THAT FAMILY GATHERING?
...

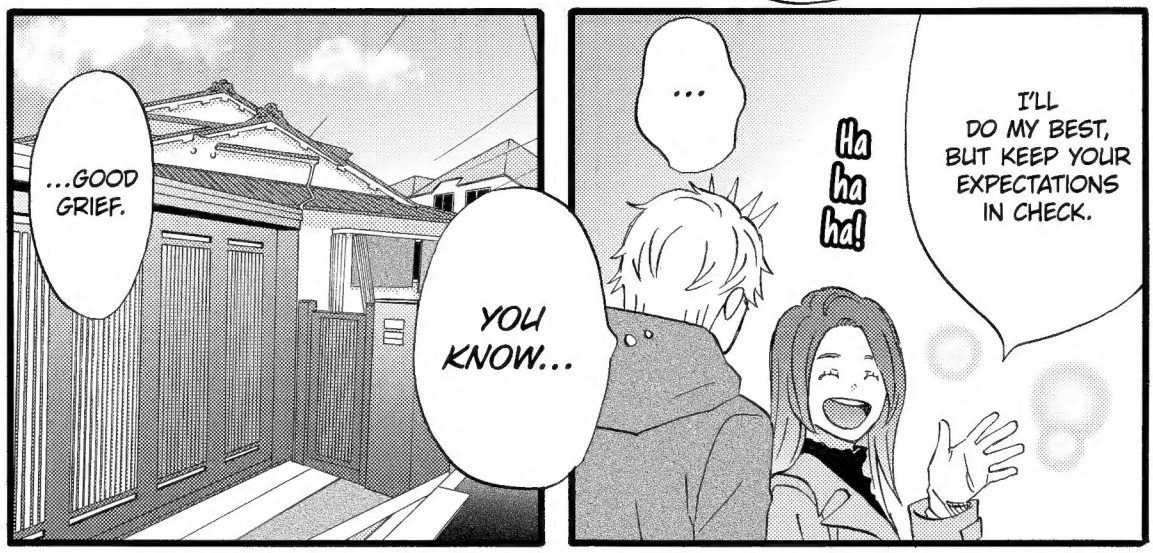

WHAT?
WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY GO SILENT?
HER LOVE FOR ME ACTUALLY WON...!!

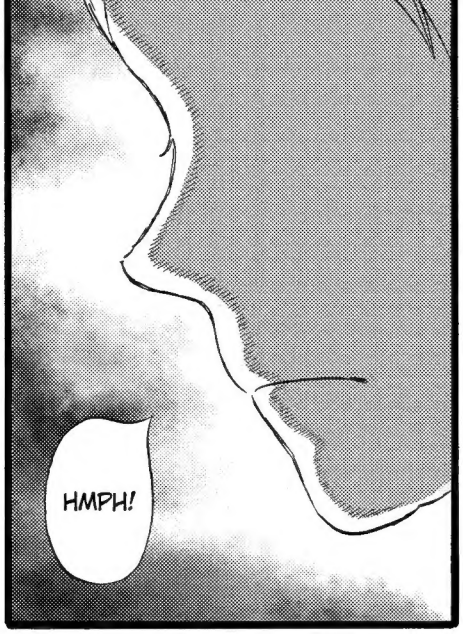
HUH...?! YOU WILL?!
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
I DON'T NEED TO SAY IT AGAIN.
H-


THAT SO?
Your heart could give out, huh...?
I'M SO SHOCKED MY HEART COULD GIVE OUT!!
BWAAAH!

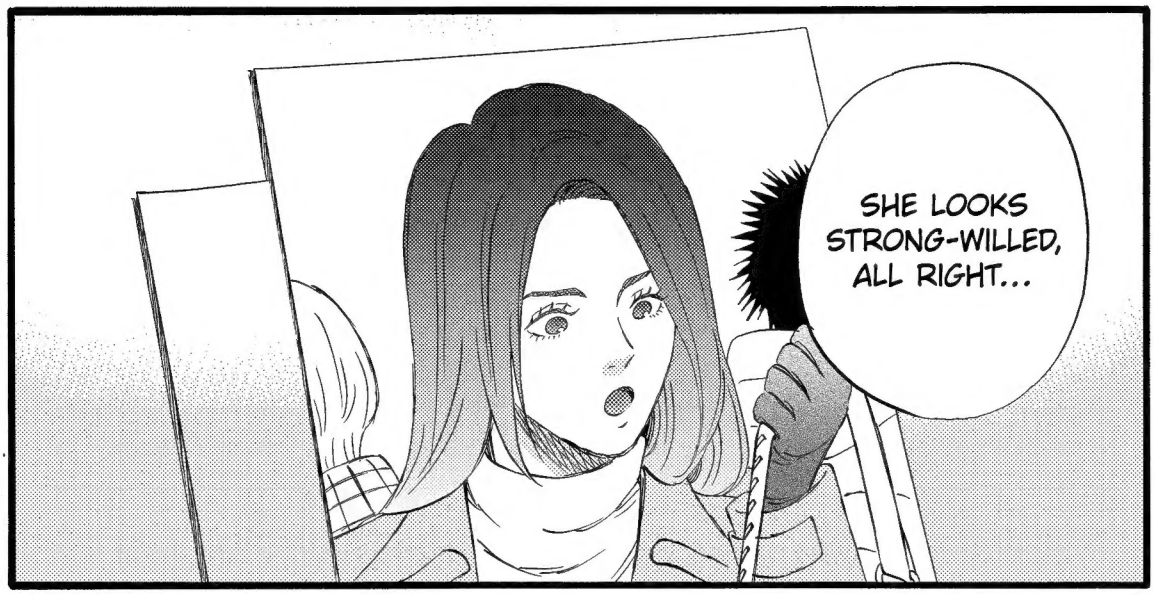
HOWEVER ...
I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND HOW WEAK MY SOCIAL SKILLS ARE.
THE MORE PEOPLE I MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LESS CAPABLE I AM OF MAINTAINING APPEARANCES.

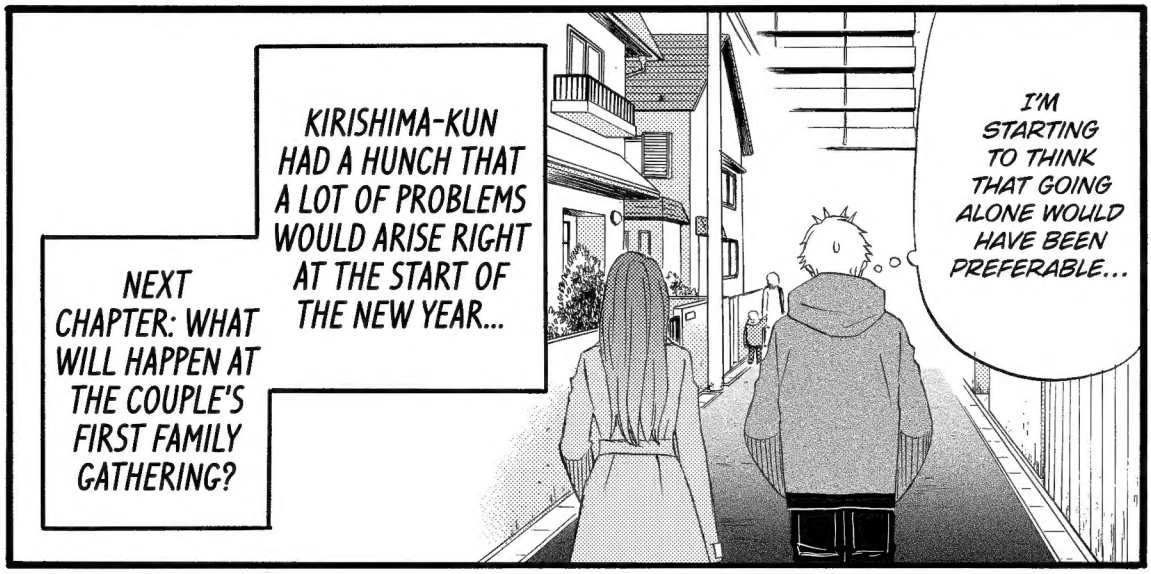
I'M UNABLE TO JUDGE WHAT NOT TO SAY, SO...
DON'T EXPECT ME TO FOLLOW YOUR LEAD AND TELL THEM EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO HEAR.
I'M NOT SURE HOW TO PROPERLY SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OLDER THAN ME.


I'LL DO MY BEST, BUT KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS IN CHECK.
Ha ha ha!
...
YOU KNOW...
...GOOD GRIEF.


HMPH!

Flap
Investigatio
Report
I WAS CURIOUS AS TO WHAT KIND OF WOMAN HAD SNAGGED MY ADORABLE LITTLE SHIROU...


SHE LOOKS STRONG-WILLED, ALL RIGHT...


I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT GOING ALONE WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE...
KIRISHIMA-KUN HAD A HUNCH THAT A LOT OF PROBLEMS WOULD ARISE RIGHT AT THE START OF THE NEW YEAR...
NEXT CHAPTER: WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE COUPLE'S FIRST FAMILY GATHERING?